# Two Gentlemen of Verona

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# Two Gentlemen of Verona

by justheretoreadhannibalfics

Summary

Hannibal and Will are on vacation in Verona, having a good time. Unfortunately, there are people around that always want to make things difficult. Will and Hannibal aren't too worried, and see it more as a chance to have some fun than anything.

# 1

“We couldn’t have gone somewhere with a beach?” Will complained, one of many complaints he had already voiced, “I mean, I’d *kill* to see you wear sandals.”

Hannibal hummed distantly.

“I would have to be your victim,” he replied, turning a page of his novel, “seeing as I would not be caught wearing such a thing unless I had died.”

Will huffed a laugh, scrunching his nose at the other man in a comical pout.

“Fine. But next time, I get to pick the location. Or else your body will be discovered wearing sandals, a graphic T, and cargo capris,” Will teased, walking over and draping himself over Hannibal’s lap.

Hannibal chuckled, putting the novel aside to pet through Wills curls. He shook his head in amusement.

“You wouldn’t dare,” he whispered, though there was no strength in his words.

Will grinned up at him mischievously.

“Then I guess we’re in agreement,” he said, leaning up to kiss Hannibal, “I pick the next place.”

Hannibal sighed, but he was still smiling. There was no fear between them, nor was there any room for misunderstanding. They had crossed and burned those bridges long ago. Will had never been happier, and Hannibal promised him the same. Their love was a vicious thing, with claws and teeth, but when it was sated and pleased, they seemed as ordinary lovers traveling together. No one who had met them since they had found each other would claim they were not entirely in love with each other. Anyone who had tried to question it had not lived long enough to spread doubt, either.

They were perfectly, completely, intimately conjoined. All the forces of the universe had not been able to tear them apart from each other. They had sure as hell tried, but Hannibal and Will were gods in comparison to anyone else. They had more power over the world than the oceans of it.

“Perhaps tomorrow I will show you the beauty of this city,” Hannibal said, his tone amused, “there are many things to be seen and enjoyed here. Shakespeare was well aware of it, not only mentioning Verona in his works, but having a few set here as well.”

Will hummed, closing his eyes and just enjoying the sensations. Hannibal had always had a way of knowing what Will enjoyed without Will having to say anything. Will was glad for it in the times when he had no words, and he liked that he didn’t have to speak to communicate with Hannibal for the most part.

“I guess you should,” Will said sleepily, “you’ll have to convince me you made a good decision. I still say we go to a beach next time.”

Hannibal sighed, though the sound was more fond than annoyed. He had long ago promised Will he would do whatever it took to keep him happy, and had done what he could to keep the promise ever since. Will didn’t always take advantage, but he had learned over the years that Hannibal didn’t mind it when he did.

“Whatever you wish, Mangusteli,” Hannibal replied.

Will opened his eyes and stared up at Hannibal, meeting his maroon eyes and feeling a rush of affection for the man. It was amazing to him how he could still react this way to the man after years. Every time Will met his eyes, or kissed him, or Hannibal said something ridiculously sugary to him, Will felt like it was the first time they had connected all over again. The connection never waned or weakened, but it was strengthened with everything they shared.

“Don’t you think you should think of a different pet name for me?” Will asked, smirking up at Hannibal, “Something more Italian, maybe?”

Hannibal hummed, massaging the shell of Will’s ears in a way he had learned Will enjoyed. Will hadn’t known he could hold stress in his ears until the first time Hannibal had done this, and it was still one of his favorite things.

“ Cuore mio,” Hannibal said softly, “amore mio. Vita mio. Anima mio. Luce dei miei occhi. Tesoro. Mangusta.”

Will was a little breathless at the ease with which Hannibal produced each term of endearment, as if he had been storing them up to produce at a moment’s notice. Will had known, obviously, that Hannibal was incredibly skilled in Italian. Will had learned it from him, after all, but it still amazed him to witness his natural grace with the language.

“Which of those would you prefer?” Hannibal asked, leaning in to whisper the words into Will’s ear, the smug smile evident in his voice, “or would you like to hear more of the options available to you?”

Will didn’t even care. He never had. He pulled Hannibal into a kiss, sitting up so he could better angle their lips together. Hannibal’s hands fell to Will’s hips, pulling him closer with a grip that was almost bruising. Will hummed in agreement, letting Hannibal swallow the sound from his lips.

“Was that an attempt to change the subject, Will?” Hannibal asked, entirely amused at the idea.

Will huffed, nipping at Hannibal’s jaw and trailing back to behind his ear.

“Apologies,” he said softly, “there’s just something about your *tongue*. So talented, you can hardly blame me for wanting to experience some of that skill for myself.”

Will ran his own tongue across Hannibal's pulse, earning a possessive growl from the man as he turned them sharply to push Will into the couch and loom over him.

"You know very well it is only for you," Hannibal accused, though he wasn't able to really act upset at all, "you may experience it whenever you like."

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Hannibal was leading Will through the streets of Verona. Will held onto his arm just as he always had when attending galas or some such in Baltimore. Hannibal was showing Will the beautiful architecture and relaying the rich history, but Will was just admiring Hannibal's profile.

Will watched Hannibal's lips as he spoke, studying the way they curled around the sounds of the Italian language.

Hannibal's passion shone through his features as he shared the details of the roman rule and whatever else was included in the history of the monuments and buildings they passed. The softness around his eyes and the slight turn of his mouth showed how much he truly enjoyed the culture of the place. Will was entirely capable of listening and learning every fact Hannibal relayed, but he didn't bother.

In all honesty, Will would go wherever Hannibal went. He would follow Hannibal across the globe, even if it meant never seeing another beach for as long as he lived. Just seeing Hannibal so pleased was worth it all. Will still owed his life to the man, and would do anything in order to see him happy.

Hannibal turned to look at Will, the sun glinting off his golden hair and captivating Will's thoughts entirely.

"What has your favorite sight been thus far?" Hannibal asked, tilting his head so his hair shifted to fall over his brow.

"You," Will answered honestly, reaching up to brush the hair away from Hannibal's eyes.

Hannibal huffed a laugh and shook his head.

"I would venture to say you have not truly heard a word I said since we left the house this morning," Hannibal accused lightly.

Will smiled innocently, batting his eyelashes up at him. He knew it was one thing Hannibal could never resist, when Will purposefully used his natural attractiveness.

"I heard you when you said we were going to get Gelato," he said sweetly, shifting his hand to interlock his fingers with Hannibal's.

Hannibal gave a long-suffering sigh, but Will could see the affectionate glint in his eye. He lifted their joined hands to press a kiss to Will's knuckles and led him down a busy street.

One of the things Will had discovered about Italy was that the buildings really were as colorful as the paintings and movies made them out to be. It really was amazing and beautiful, and he wasn't at all upset that they had travelled there when they left the states. He also adored being able to see the world through Hannibal's eyes, and experiencing various places in Europe would help him really understand what the man saw. Hannibal was a lover of beauty, and Will had slowly grown to appreciate beautiful things as Hannibal saw them.

Hannibal ushered Will into a small shop, sandwiched between other stores and businesses.

No matter where they went in Verona, everything actually felt Italian. It wasn't like in the states, where each business had a vastly different style and energy based on the interior and exterior designs. Every door they walked through felt like another Italian building. Will was actually enjoying it a lot. It was as if the entire country had collaborated to decide on an aesthetic, and it carried to every aspect of their lives. The continuity was fantastic.

Hannibal ordered them a cup of Gelato with two spoons and they walked out to find an outdoor table. It was warm and sunny, and Will basked in the warmth as the sun shone down on them both. He tipped his head back and closed his eyes, letting his eyelids be warmed by the sun.

Will felt his hand being wrapped up in one of Hannibal's, and he hummed pleasantly.

Will opened his eyes and turned to his partner, catching Hannibal staring at him with blatant adoration. Will grinned at Hannibal, huffing a soft laugh.

"How could anyone ever take you seriously when you can make that face?" Will asked, absolutely in love with the man, and more every second.

"I am quite capable of being entirely somber when I choose to," Hannibal defended pleasantly, "and I do believe whatever expression you are referring to has not been revealed to anyone whom I require to take me seriously."

Will hummed again, taking a bit of Gelato and licking it off the spoon while keeping steady eye contact with Hannibal. Will smirked as the man's eyes flicked down to track the motion. Hannibal was incredibly easy to work over when it came to Will Graham. Will took great joy in making the man squirm, in any way he could.

"I wonder how your life would be if everyone could see what I see," Will mused, "Would the earth's rotation change itself in light of the truth? Would the stars change the pattern in the heavens at the wave of your hand? Or would everyone collectively decide you take yourself too seriously, and laugh in your face for it?"

Hannibal took his own spoon of Gelato, his eyes sparkling with amusement as he raised an eyebrow at Will.

"Yes," he replied simply.

Will laughed.

“I suppose that’s fair,” he said, “have any more sights you’re dying to show me?”

Hannibal shook his head at Will as he took another spoon of Gelato.

“You have not seen a single building I have shown you since waking up this morning,” he said, “Why would I put myself through more of the same?”

Will pouted, once again taking advantage by batting his eyelashes at his partner.

“Because you love me?” he asked, “and I really do enjoy seeing you get excited about it. We could go out every day and take the same route, seeing all of your favorite places, and I wouldn’t know the difference. Maybe by the time we leave Verona I would have learned some of the history.”

Hannibal’s expression softened more, an almost impossible task as he had already been looking about as lovesick as possible.

Will wondered if either of them would ever get over the novelty of just having each other in their lives.

“And I would take joy in every moment of seeing you walk these streets with me,” Hannibal said, raising Will’s hand to press a kiss to it again, “a place such as this is the only one near worthy of your beauty.”

Will smiled, plucking Hannibal’s spoon from his long fingers to eat some more Gelato with it.

“Though I do wonder why I ask for two spoons when you make a point to have us only require one,” Hannibal teased.

Will hummed around his bite of Gelato.

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The two men were far too enchanted with each other to notice Fritz. It was as plain as day that they were infatuated past the point of full consciousness of their surroundings. That made Fritz’s job a lot easier. He just had to watch them until they separated for long enough to make a move.

Fritz didn’t know much about these targets, but he knew what they looked like and where they lived. He knew he needed to get a hold of the one with the dark hair. It was obvious the dark haired one was going to be the weak link. The taller one was clearly the one in charge, doing most of the talking and being obviously familiar with the area. All Fritz would have to do is get his hands on the smaller one in order to get the job done and get paid.

The biggest problem he saw at the moment, watching the two eat their Gelato with all the interactions of a couple on their honeymoon, was how they were plastered to each other. They never seemed to leave each other’s sight. They even managed to be touching each other in some way or another most of the time.

Fritz almost felt sick having to watch the two interact with each other. They were sickeningly in love, and he wasn't sure he would be able to stomach many more days of it.

Why these two had landed in the poor graces of Fritz's boss, he didn't know. He didn't really need to know, but he amused himself with theories as he tried not to become too disgusted by their public displays of affection.

The taller one must certainly be the one who had caused trouble, being the one in control of everything. He walked like a man without a care in the world, which meant he probably came from old money, or he had enough connections he didn't believe he had anything to worry about. There was no small number of people like that who had earned the attention of Fritz's employer, though he had never seen one as odd.

The man dressed as eccentrically as anyone Fritz had ever seen. He was wearing a three piece suit with loud patterns, despite the fact he seemed to have no plans for the day other than walking around the city with his sugar baby. The said other man was dressed more casually, wearing a blue button up shirt and dark grey slacks. They made an interesting contrast, yet somehow managed to look good together.

The pair stood up, disposing of their now empty Gelato cup, to continue on their way through the streets of Verona.

Fritz stood up a minute after they left his view, folding up his newspaper and making his way in the direction they had gone. He hadn't had to try very hard so far to keep track of them, as they travelled almost exclusively by foot, so he had no worries going forward.

# 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“How did you sleep, Mangusta?” Hannibal mumbled, turning over in the bed to face Will.

The morning light streamed in and lit his hair up gold against the white pillowcase. Will hummed pleasantly, just admiring the view for the moment.

“Like the dead,” he replied, smiling to his handsome partner, “you?”

Hannibal smiled sleepily, shifting to pull Will to him and kiss his temple.

“O, for muse of fire that would asund the brightest heaven of invention,” he said softly.

Will rolled his eyes, huffing a laugh. He nuzzled closer to Hannibal in the bed and breathed in deeply.

“I’m just gonna pretend you answered like a normal person,” Will mumbled into Hannibal’s chest, “‘cause I haven’t had any coffee yet, and I don’t have the brain functions to play that game right now.”

Will felt the smile Hannibal wore as they lay together. The man abhorred rudeness in almost every person. Will was the exception to that, and nearly every other rule the man had. He was the only person who didn’t have to be concerned about his position in the world. He was by Hannibal’s side, and would be until one or both of them died.

“Would you like me to make you some coffee?” Hannibal asked, his tone warm and amused.

Will groaned.

“Don’t make me decide,” he complained, “you’re so warm and comfortable. I can’t tell you to leave me here, even if I do want coffee.”

Hannibal chuckled low, carding his fingers through Will’s hair.

“You are welcome to come with me to the kitchen,” he pointed out, “I do not mean that you must be left alone as the coffee brews.”

Will scrunched his nose and pouted.

“But then I’d have to move,” he whined, clutching at Hannibal more, “and I just want to lay here with you all day.”

Hannibal huffed a laugh and shook his head.

“Oh how you love to torment me,” he mused, “If you truly wish for us to remain in bed all day, all you need do is ask.”

Will frowned.

Sometimes, Hannibal was too accommodating. Will had wanted a bit of an argument that morning, just something to get the blood pumping. Hannibal was too perfect for that, apparently.

“You wouldn’t let us lay here all day,” Will objected, “we’d have to skip meals. You would never let us do that.”

Hannibal hummed in consideration, his fingers massaging delicate patterns in Will’s scalp.

“Now you create a conundrum for me, as penance for the one which I have given you?” he asked, “how cruel a god you are.”

Will smiled to himself, knowing he was getting somewhere. Hannibal was going to have to make a decision soon.

“I’m merely pointing out the conundrum you created for yourself. You say you would stay in bed all day, yet we both know you would never let me miss a meal. You care too much about my health.”

Hannibal sighed.

“Then what do you suggest I do?” Hannibal asked patiently, as if he didn’t know what Will was doing.

Will snuggled even closer to Hannibal, hiding his grin in Hannibal’s chest.

“I don’t know. You’re supposed to be the smart one.”

Before Will could fully process what was happening, Hannibal was up and out of the bed, but so was he. Hannibal was carrying Will as if he weighed nothing. That was absurd, because Will was actually a healthy weight now, and Hannibal really did make sure he never missed a meal. Will knew Hannibal lived in constant fear that Will would return to the state he had been in when they met. He was grateful that Hannibal cared so much.

“What the hell?” Will said, instinctively wrapping his arms around Hannibal’s neck to keep from falling.

Hannibal chuckled and started walking to the kitchen.

“You needn’t get up, Will, but if you insist on remaining with me while I make you coffee, this is the best compromise.”

Will felt his face flush with embarrassment and frustration.

This wasn't what he had had in mind when he started the game this morning. Not that he really had anything specific in mind. He just hadn't expected this.

Will pressed his face into the crook of Hannibal's neck to hide the blush, and Hannibal's grip on him tightened in response. Will knew Hannibal was enjoying this far too much, but he couldn't make himself demand to be put down.

There was something so hot about Hannibal being able to carry him.

"I may need your help, here, Will," Hannibal said once they were in the kitchen.

Will looked up, and realized Hannibal was holding him with both arms, meaning he didn't have a hand to make coffee with.

Seeing a chance to turn the tables again, Will grinned and shifted. He wrapped his legs around Hannibal's waist and hugged his neck tighter, like some sort of koala.

Hannibal's hesitation was all the validation Will needed. He knew Hannibal didn't know what to do. He hadn't expected this, of all things, and now he was going to have to deal with what he had brought upon himself.

Hannibal's arms loosened slowly, as if not trusting that Will could hold himself that way, but eventually he began to prepare the coffee. Will felt objects pass very close to his back, and Hannibal occasionally ran a finger up his spine just to make him keen a bit. It was torture of the sweetest kind.

Will felt Hannibal start to weary of carrying him after a few minutes, and he pressed a kiss to the man's neck before he unwound his legs and stood on his own feet for the first time that morning. Hannibal almost looked offended when Will began to pull away, as if he thought Will was calling him weak. Will just smiled and kissed him again.

"Don't wear yourself out for your pride," he chided, "I'm sure you'd like to make breakfast to go with the coffee, so I should get out of your way."

Hannibal huffed, almost pouting, but then grabbed Will and hefted him up onto the counter instead of letting him go.

Will rolled his eyes, making room between his knees for Hannibal to lean into his space. Hannibal nuzzled at his neck a bit, and Will laughed.

"At a loss for words?" he teased.

Hannibal looked up at him through his eyelashes, looking devastatingly gorgeous. Will decided that was unfair, but there was nothing he could do about it.

"Never at a loss, Mangusta," Hannibal replied coyly, "but there are times when words are not necessary. Don't you agree?"

Will hummed noncommittally.

Hannibal pulled away and pressed a hot mug of coffee into Will's hands with another quick kiss.

"Now, stay right there," Hannibal commanded softly, "I'll prepare breakfast."

Will grinned into his coffee. Hannibal had never really allowed Will to sit on the counters back home, saying it was uncouth. The fact that he had not only allowed it, but initiated it and now told Will to stay there, meant Will was definitely making progress.

Will didn't necessarily intend to change Hannibal, of course. He loved the man just the way he was. Will just wanted to see what he could get away with because of the love Hannibal felt for him. So far, nothing was off limits, and Will wanted to find the limits. He wanted to push the boundaries to near breaking.

And he wanted to have fun.

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Fritz was getting extremely frustrated. He had been following the targets for weeks, and they just never left the company of the other. At least not in a way he could take advantage of. They were often in crowded places, and those were the only times one ever left the side of the other, not to mention they always reunited almost immediately.

Fritz almost wondered if this would be worth it. He was sure another job would come along, but he didn't know if it would be in time to save his brother.

No, he had to get this job done, and soon. He just needed to figure out how to do that.

The dark haired man batted his eyes up at his partner, for what felt like the thousandth time to Fritz. The taller man smiled indulgently, apparently his default setting, and started leading his partner away from the little park they had been walking through.

Fritz followed them, cursing his boss for putting him on a job that required him to be a witness to all of this. If he finished this job, he promised himself he would be more particular about those he accepted in the future.

The two men made their way into an art museum, and Fritz followed. He would have just waited outside, except he really did want to finish this job and he would never forgive himself if he missed a chance to grab the dark haired one just because he didn't feel like following them into a place like this.

Fritz would not have gone into a place like the art museum if it had been his decision. The lights were bright, to help people see the art he guessed, and that made it harder for him to hide. The kind of people in there were also more likely to take notice of him, just so they could sneer at his appearance.

Not that Fritz looked like he lived on the streets. He actually was somewhat proud of the coat he was wearing. He had bought it from his last job, and he liked to think it made him look respectable.

No, the problem was that everyone here was posh. People like them would look down on the queen of England if she walked in without her crown, because they would think she wasn't showing off enough.

So Fritz tried to keep a low profile.

The targets did just about the opposite.

Fritz watched as the taller man managed to attract a small congregation, speaking to them in a way that somehow enchanted them all. The man's eyes seemed to shine as he spoke, and words flowed from his mouth in spellbinding rivers.

Fritz wasn't sure what he was talking about, but he guessed it had something to do with one of the paintings. It would make the most sense, at least.

The men and women who had gathered around were basically fawning over the tall man, soaking up his words like they were invaluable treasures that would never be found again after this moment. Their eyes were wide and adoring.

Fritz found himself transfixed as well, just watching the peculiar grace with which the man was moving and speaking. It really was mesmerizing.

Fritz shook himself out of it, blinking and trying to dislodge the fog that had filled his head as he watched. He looked back at the targets, but nearly jumped out of his skin when the darker haired one met his gaze.

The blue eyes froze Fritz in place, as if his feet had taken root. He had been spotted.

Fritz had been working in this job for years, and he had never been caught by the targets. There had been a few close calls with bodyguards or security details, but the targets themselves had always been relatively helpless.

But the intensity in the eyes of this dark haired man gave Fritz a deep sense of fear.

Something was not right about this man. The man Fritz was supposed to abduct and hold for some sort of ransom. The man who clearly played second fiddle to his partner, and who had faded into the background even better than Fritz himself while the taller one spoke.

There was real reason for concern.

The dark haired man tipped his head as if telling Fritz to look at something. Fritz shifted his gaze up, and saw that the taller man was also looking at him now.

Dark fear gripped at Fritz, and he would have started trembling if he hadn't trained himself not to.

The taller man smiled, and winked at Fritz before turning back to his small gathering and continued to regale them with a story or something.

*To hell with that.*

Fritz ran right out of the museum, knowing that was not the end. He had a job to do, and he was going to do it. He just sure as hell was not going back into that building. If they separated while they were in there, and there was a perfect opportunity for Fritz to nab the guy, he didn't care. He would miss it, and manufacture a better chance later if he had to. He had done it before.

He just was not going back in *there* .

Fritz followed them from an even greater distance for the rest of the night, until they had retired to their home once more and he was sure they wouldn't be leaving.

Then, he called a guy and had his hair cut and dyed, and got a better disguise.

Fritz had never cared about altering his appearance more than the clothes he wore, but he sure as hell wasn't going to take any more chances.

There was something wrong with his targets, and Fritz wished he had any other job in the world.

Chapter End Notes

Don't be mad. I know it's been forever. I know this series really deserves a good ending. I know. For some reason, I'm just having so much writer's block with this last one. T-T I'm sorry. I'll try to get the next chapter up soon.

# 3

“So someone *has* been following us. What do you think they might want?” Will asked, leaning over the balcony railing to look over the city street.

Hannibal took a sip of wine and hummed in consideration. He wasn’t particularly engaged in the conversation, or rather he was valiantly tailoring his posture and responses in order to appear so. Will didn’t know for whose benefit he was acting, but he didn’t mind. He allowed Hannibal his eccentricities, especially because he was both aware of them and particularly fond.

“I have many theories,” Hannibal replied, “each equally as likely or unlikely as the next. It wouldn’t do for us to be caught up in one vein of thought while whomever it is continues on with some other purpose.”

Will took a sip from his own glass and nodded distantly. The sun was setting, and the sky was lighting up with vibrant oranges and reds. It was difficult for him to be terribly concerned about anything when standing there, Hannibal only an arm’s reach away.

Not to mention he had long since felt little fear, even in the face of great danger. He considered himself a survivor of nearly the worst possible, and believed he and Hannibal were the most powerful beings on earth. No matter what happened, they would emerge victorious, grinning in bloody glory.

“What do you think we should do about it, if anything?” Will asked, allowing his tone to show he was less than concerned.

“I believe this is a case where we should, as you might say, play it by ear,” Hannibal answered, turning a page of the book he was reading.

Will rolled his eyes and took another long sip of his wine. Hannibal was endearing, even when he was frustrating.

“What is your opinion on the matter, darling?” Hannibal asked, finally looking up to fix Will with an amused look.

Will hummed a bit, mostly for show. He had been building a profile of the man nearly all day, and they both knew it. Perhaps they both had their eccentricities.

“I think he wants to get one of us alone,” Will said, “for whatever reason. He wants us to separate. I think we should do it, if only to satisfy my curiosity.”

Hannibal huffed a soft laugh, putting his book down to walk over and embrace Will from behind.

“Curiosity killed the cat, Mangusta,” he whispered, pressing soft kisses to his neck and jaw.

“Satisfaction brought it back,” Will countered, turning his head to catch Hannibal’s lips with his own, “I’ll go out to pick up the wine and truffles for dinner tomorrow, and if he does nothing then we can rest our heads in safety. If he takes action, we can play it by ear. I think that’s a compromise you can agree on.”

Hannibal was silent for a moment, resting his chin on Will’s shoulder as they both stared at the slowly receding sun.

“I fear losing you,” Hannibal said at length, his tone soft and serious.

Will felt an ache deep in his chest at the words. He knew Hannibal rarely showed his vulnerable side, even to him, and this was it. Hannibal was capable of fear. Hannibal was afraid of something happening to Will.

Will turned around, setting his wine glass down on a nearby table so he could hold Hannibal’s face in his hands.

Will stared into Hannibal’s eyes, an action he would not have been able to bear before meeting the man. He allowed his own expression to show his true affections for him. They had a perfect understanding between them, but that didn’t alter the intensity of the connection they shared when they wanted to just see into the soul of the other.

“Let no one think of me that I am humble or weak or passive. Let them understand I am of a different kind; dangerous to my enemies, loyal to my friends,” Will said, placing a placating kiss to Hannibal’s lips.

Hannibal sighed, likely already knowing he would not win in the argument if he allowed it to develop into one.

“How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell,” Hannibal replied softly, “striving to better, oft we mar what’s well.”

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet. This is not done by jostling in the street,” Will countered, “Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.”

“Alas,” Hannibal said, pressing his own kiss to Will’s stubbled jaw, “a crimson river of warm blood, like a bubbling fountain stirred with wind, doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips, coming and going with thy honeyed breath.”

Will smiled. He kissed Hannibal deeply, grateful for the way they could always come to an agreement. It may not have made Hannibal entirely satisfied, but if Will ended up killing their shadow, he would be pleased. Will fully intended to let himself be caught, just to find out what the man wanted with them, and he would find his way out of wherever he found himself. Hannibal likely suspected as much, but would allow Will to play his game as long as it remained entertaining.

“The bright day is done,” Will whispered, “and we are for the dark.”

Hannibal smiled against Will’s neck, continuing to kiss him softly.

“It gives me wonder great as my content to see you here before me,” he mumbled.

Will picked up his glass of wine and downed the rest of his wine. He worked his fingers into the buttons of Hannibal’s vest, returning the kisses Hannibal was peppering his skin with.

“We are such stuff as dreams are made of,” He said, biting Hannibal’s ear gently, “But one fiend at a time, I’ll fight their legions o’er.”

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“He thinks I’m the weaker one,” Will said, getting dressed in preparation to go out, “He’ll come after me, because he thinks I’m an easy target.”

Hannibal hummed in agreement.

“He doth but mistake the truth totally,” he said, smiling at Will as he set out some fresh foods for breakfast.

Will huffed a laugh as Hannibal walked over to do his tie properly. In all the years, Will had never been able to figure it out, though he didn’t mind needing Hannibal to do it for him.

“Do you think this has anything to do with Il Mostro?” he asked.

Hannibal smiled and pressed a kiss to Will’s jaw.

“My salad days, when I was green in judgement and cold in blood,” he mused, “if it does, I cannot be sure who may be behind it. I only came across one man who ever suspected me, and he still resides in Florence as far as I am aware.”

Will nodded, pulling on his vest and making sure he was putting it on properly by standing in front of the mirror. He watched Hannibal’s reflection continue around the room behind him, moving with his usual grace.

“Do please be careful today, Mangusta,” Hannibal said, allowing his concern to show itself again.

Will turned, taking his jacket when Hannibal held it out for him.

“My heart’s subdued, even to the very quality of my lord,” he replied, kissing Hannibal quickly, “I almost think you doubt my capabilities.”

“Never,” Hannibal promised, pulling Will close by his waist, “I doubt the intelligence of whoever dares touch you. I worry he will do something foolish, which may cause you harm.”

Will nodded. He kissed Hannibal reassuringly, hoping the man would only worry as much as was reasonable. It wouldn’t do for him to be wracked with fear over nothing.

“Don’t worry, darling,” Will said, “It’s just like noodling. I’m good at fishing, Hannibal.”

Hannibal raised an eyebrow, smiling despite his lingering concern.

“What is *noodling*?” he asked.

Will grinned up at him, pulling away to comb his hair and make sure he was ready to head out for the day.

“I’ll tell you all about it once we’re done with this guy,” Will promised, “that way, both of us have motivation to see this through as quickly as possible.”

Hannibal sighed, shaking his head.

“You always search for ways to torment me,” he complained.

Will flashed his teeth to his partner before snatching the list off the table and heading to the door.

“The wait makes the reward worth it,” he said pleasantly, opening the door and slipping out onto the street.

Will made his way to the store Hannibal had made sure to show him. Apparently, it was the only one he truly trusted to have the ingredients of good enough quality for Hannibal’s cooking. It was small, but clearly high end. Even without Hannibal having confirmed it, Will would easily have been able to guess it was somewhere one could purchase the fancy things Hannibal liked.

The entire trip, Will felt the eyes on him. He caught glimpses of the man following him every now and then, though the man was admittedly better at tailing him than most people Will had seen before. He kept a low profile, staying far away while being able to keep Will in his sight. He occasionally changed his shirt or donned a hat, changing his appearance enough that most people wouldn’t notice he was the same man they had seen earlier. He was very good at his job. Will had to give him that.

Will had his paper bag of groceries, and started heading home. He kept an eye on the man following him, though was sure not to let him know he had been spotted. He took his time walking, very obvious about his sightseeing, as there were still buildings with lovely architecture and he was not, in reality, immune to it.

The man slowly drew closer, though never drawing attention to himself. Will watched, knowing he wouldn’t wait too long. The man wouldn’t want to strike too close to Will’s home.

Will ducked into a narrow alley, knowing it would theoretically be a shortcut. It would also provide ample opportunity for the man to make his move.

Will heard the man run up behind him and turned, as if to greet him. He needed to appear unassuming.

The blow to the back of his head came exactly when Will expected, and he managed to make sure he didn’t bash his skull on anything as he fell.

As Will's vision failed, and the man loomed over him, Will hoped he wouldn't let the groceries go to waste. Hannibal would be disappointed.

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Fritz carefully tied up the man, looking him over as he did.

Being such a high-profile target, Fritz had expected him to be a bit harder to get. It had been a stroke of luck that he had decided to not only leave his companion in order to shop, but also to travel down an alley with no other foot traffic.

The man was physically beautiful. Fritz wasn't immune to that knowledge. He could tell the man would be able to get just about whatever partner he chose with his looks. His dark hair and fair skin reminded Fritz of a Botticelli painting he had seen once, and by handling him a bit he was surprised to find that the suit had been concealing sturdy, toned muscles. It was no wonder a man with the tastes the other target had would desire this man. He wondered how the man would look without his scruff. He imagined he would look much younger, and perhaps innocent.

Fritz supposed one couldn't be beautiful and intelligent at once. It would be unfair to the rest.

Fritz removed the man's jacket and vest, along with his shoes. He loosened the tie to make sure his breathing wasn't impeded at all, and made sure he wasn't carrying a gun or anything. He needed this man to be relatively unharmed in order for the deal to go down. The boss had been very clear with his instructions.

Fritz pulled out the man's phone and set it on a nearby table. It would be useful later, and he was glad it hadn't broken when the man had fallen.

Fritz folded the man's jacket and vest, setting them on the table next to the phone and putting his shoes on top. They were nice clothes, betraying the wealth of one or both of the targets. Fritz wondered if this job would get him a big enough paycheck to buy something like that.

Not that he would choose to do so. His brother was still trying to get out of debt with some thugs, and Fritz didn't want to see him killed.

Fritz unpacked the man's grocery bag, finding that all the items were quite possibly the most expensive options the store had offered. There was wine, cheese, some mushrooms, and a loaf of bread.

The man wouldn't be needing them, not to mention he could obviously afford to buy more if he got out of this alive. Fritz decided to help himself while he waited for the man to wake up.

It wasn't as if Fritz was his brother's keeper. He had refused to help him out many times. The only thing Fritz couldn't do was stand by and watch him be murdered for his poor choices. He didn't deserve to be killed just because he was an idiot who couldn't come up with the cash quickly enough. Fritz had a soft spot for him, and had come to his rescue more than he would ever admit.

Fritz supposed there was some sort of irony in that. He protected his brother from being murdered while his job was to kidnap and occasionally execute individuals who were often less guilty of any crime than his brother was.

Fritz carved himself some bread and cheese, sitting back in his chair and watching the unconscious man breathe.

This job was supposed to pay well enough for him to get his brother out of debt and out of the country. Fritz had plans for some of the money as well, of course, but his first priority was getting his brother out of immediate danger. Then, he would use whatever was left over to make his own life more pleasant.

Fritz decided he should give an update to the boss, and sighed as he pulled out his phone.

“What is it?”

Fritz rolled his eyes at the professional rudeness.

“I have the dark haired man in my possession right now,” Fritz answered, “I’m just waiting on him to wake up.”

The voice on the other end hummed, and Fritz heard papers being shuffled and flipped through.

“Alright. Check the mailbox. We have some more info on the target that you’re going to need. Don’t mess this up.”

Fritz wanted to scoff, but he knew better.

“Of course,” he said, “talk to you later.”

The call ended, and Fritz shoved his phone into his pocket. He checked the bindings on the man before he walked up the stairs to the mailbox.

Fritz didn’t much like the thought of leaving his captive alone, but the man was unconscious and bound tightly. He didn’t think there was much trouble the man could get into at the moment.

Fritz got the envelope and began reading the instruction on his way back down to the basement. He frowned in confusion as he read.

*-Do not allow any bindings to be tied near his hands*

*-do not untie him*

*-do not engage him in conversation*

*-if he starts trying to talk with you, gag him, but do not deprive him of oxygen*

*-do not damage him*

*-the subject is highly intelligent and capable. Do not underestimate him*

*-send your location to the below number and wait*

*-transportation has been arranged*

*-you will be paid when the subject has been received*

Fritz shook his head in wonder and put the paper into his pocket. He again looked at the man he was holding, trying to see what was so special about him.

The instructions hadn't said anything about a ransom, which meant this man wasn't a hostage. He was cargo. And precious cargo at that. Don't damage him? Fritz hadn't been told it was *that* kind of job.

Fritz looked over his captive, trying to decipher what was so special about him. The instructions had also said he was highly intelligent, but Fritz didn't think that could possibly be right. The boss was probably trying to keep him on his toes. Nothing Fritz had seen while following the targets had suggested to him that this man was anything better than possibly a bit above average. The other man was running the show, obviously, and this one had gone out alone after likely figuring out they were being followed. He had basically walked into Fritz's waiting arms.

That certainly didn't make for a great argument for the man's high intelligence.

Fritz thought that all over while he helped himself to the bread and cheese. He watched the man for a long time, marking his slow and even breathing, but he eventually started to worry.

If he had somehow knocked this guy into a coma, there would be hell to pay.

"Shouldn't you be awake by now?" Fritz wondered aloud, wincing at the worry he heard in his own voice.

"Your concern is touching," the man said back smoothly, opening his eyes and turning his head up to look at Fritz, "I was beginning to think you didn't care."

Fritz about jumped out of his skin, having honestly thought the man was unconscious. To add to that, he hadn't actually heard the man's voice before, and it sounded different than he expected.

Fritz had expected a youthful American accent, and had half thought he might not know Italian at all. Instead, the man's low, rough voice curled around the words as if he had been born with them in his mouth. For one, hysterical moment, Fritz thought this man's Italian accent might be better than his own.

Then, Fritz pulled himself back together, but the man looked at him curiously.

“I didn’t mean to startle you,” he said, making no move to shift into a more comfortable position despite the awkwardness Fritz had left him in on the floor, “but you did address me first.”

Fritz was stunned into silence, not even remembering that he had been instructed to prevent the man from talking to him.

The man watched him for another moment before he raised an eyebrow.

“I don’t believe we have been formally introduced,” the man said calmly, apparently unaware of the situation he was in, “my name is Will Graham. I don’t think you cared to know that before. Am I right?”

Fritz finally regained his voice.

“You’re right. I don’t care who you are.”

Will grinned, as if that was exactly what he wanted to hear.

“That’s fine with me,” he said, “but I do care quite a bit who you are. Or at least I would like something to call you by. I don’t care if it’s your real name. Just something.”

Fritz floundered for a moment, still not thinking of his instructions. The man’s reaction was throwing him off, and he was having a hard time thinking.

“Fritz,” he told the man before he could think better of it.

Will smiled wider, as if pleased with Fritz for his cooperation.

“Nice to meet you, Fritz,” he said, “or, I suppose it would be nicer if you hadn’t given me an impressive knock to the head. I don’t suppose you’re going to tell me why we have found ourselves in this situation.”

# 4

Fritz seemed to actually consider it, and Will mentally laughed at him. This man had *not* been told who he was dealing with.

“No,” Fritz said eventually, seeming to gather his sense, “I’m not supposed to talk to you, and you don’t need to know anyhow.”

Will nodded.

“Fair enough. You know, you do an incredible job. You stay a good distance away, you change your appearance, and you don’t start anything you don’t think you can finish. I bet you don’t get paid enough.”

Fritz eyed Will warily, probably feeling like he was a bad guy in a movie, and the protagonist was trying to convert them to good in order to escape. Will smiled, his most winning, charming smile. And Fritz frowned.

“I get paid what I ask for,” Fritz said, clearly sending the message that Will had better stop that or he would get a gag stuffed into his mouth.

Will nodded in understanding. He was slowly getting a better picture of his captor, and he was working on his plan. He wouldn’t be able to just outright convince Fritz to let him go, but he certainly didn’t want to wait to find out what the plan was. He wanted Fritz to believe he knew what Will was trying to do.

“Enough to help your brother,” Will concluded aloud, “How noble of you. I was an only child, so no ties there, but I can empathize with the loyalty. Blood is thicker than water?”

Fritz, through his surprise and confusion, seemed to feel like he was being insulted in some way. He scowled and ate some more of the overly expensive bread and cheese. Will absently hoped he was enjoying the food. Hannibal insisted it was the best.

“My loyalty is spent,” Fritz said, apparently forgetting again that he wasn’t supposed to talk to Will, “This is the last time I get him out of trouble.”

Will nodded, being sure to show understanding.

“Blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb, then,” he said, satisfied with the pure confusion on Fritz’s face, “I probably understand that better than familial loyalty. But you’re going to give him a big help. You’re planning to help him start over. That’s no small undertaking.”

Fritz was pale, now, but his expression turned hard. He felt that Will either knew too much, or had crossed a line. Most likely both, actually.

“That’s enough from you, Mister Graham,” Fritz said icily, “no more talking. At least about me.”

Will nodded, accepting that. He was starting to be uncomfortable in his position on the floor, but he had been through worse and he wouldn’t show weakness just yet.

“That’s fine. Fair, even. How about you pour yourself a glass of wine, and I’ll tell you about this particular vintage,” Will said, “of course, only one glass. It would be bad for your boss to show up and find you drunk.”

Frits held up the bottle and examined it a bit.

“I don’t drink wine,” he stated honestly, “and the boss would get angry if he smelled it on me too.”

Will huffed, feigning bewilderment.

“Well alright, but don’t let it go to waste,” he tried, “maybe you should send it with me wherever I’m going. Whoever I end up with might appreciate it. It doesn’t look like I’m being held for ransom.”

Fritz nodded, his eyes sharp now, less confused than before. He was thinking clearly at least, but Will thought it was likely he still had the upper hand. Fritz didn’t have enough context to make informed decisions about their situation.

“No,” Fritz agreed, “I don’t think I’m making any ransom calls.”

Will nodded. He had to be sure Fritz believed he agreed with him. Whenever possible, Will had to make it seem like they were on the same side, while not overdoing it in case Fritz became more suspicious of him.

“Would you like to?” Will offered, making Fritz nearly jump out of his skin again.

Fritz fixed Will with an expression of bewildered fear and surprised wonder. Will thought it was an amusing expression, and he almost wished Hannibal could see it so the man could draw it for him later.

“What?” Fritz said.

Will shrugged.

“You could use my phone, the one right there, and call my paramour for a ransom. He can pay it, I’m almost sure, and he will. You can let him hear my voice and give him a drop place. Then, you hand me off to whoever hired you, and collect your payment and the ransom on top. You get paid twice for one job. It’s a pretty good deal if you ask me.”

Fritz seemed impressed, but clearly suspicious of the entire proposition. He frowned at Will and tapped his fingers thoughtfully on the table.

“Why would you give me that idea?” Fritz asked after a few minutes.

Will smiled.

“You haven’t been filled in,” Will told him patiently, “I escaped from the Verger estate, and then returned to kill them all. I only managed that by making friends where I could, and keeping my enemies happy with me. I was there to help them with plans like this. I’m good at what I do, and I do things like this. I’m telling you, once I’m out of your hands, I’ll escape again. I don’t see any reason you shouldn’t benefit from this a bit. You aren’t truly the one I have a conflict with, clearly. I’ll be no worse off, for sure.”

Fritz worried his lower lip a bit, clearly tempted by the idea despite now knowing that Will was something like a mastermind for complex operations.

Will wondered how someone like Fritz had gotten this far in a career like this. Clearly, he was well trained in the trade, but not so clever that he would ever try to work one over on his boss. He was smart, but only as far as it served him to get the job done. Anything beyond the parameters of the job didn’t occur to him, which served his boss well. Fritz never would have thought to do anything under the nose of his boss on his own.

It was as if Fritz had just been waiting for someone like Will to come along.

And Will was as pleased as pudding to take advantage of that.

“But why would you?” Fritz asked, clearly trying to show he was smarter than this.

Will huffed a laugh.

“Because it’s entertaining,” he said.

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The cold, even way Will said it made a shiver run down Fritz’s spine. It occurred to him, then, that he may be holding a complete psychopath. Will didn’t show any hesitation, and Fritz honestly believed entertainment was his only motive for suggesting this entire plot.

Will had to be uncomfortable in the position he was laying in, but he didn’t squirm or shift, or even show discomfort in his facial expression. There was something unnatural about the man. Something that was slowly but surely putting Fritz on edge. He was just barely, almost unnoticeably wrong. Fritz was starting to be anxious for the transport to come and take the man away from him.

But why shouldn’t he get a little extra for having to deal with him? The man hadn’t made anything easy for him, except maybe that last part of the abduction deal. Fritz had been forced to trail him for more than a month, and had to watch his every move. None of it had been pleasant, and Fritz felt he was owed some compensation for all the trouble. He could have enough to get his brother out of trouble and then some.

And the plan Will had set out didn’t seem to have any flaws. Ransom deals were almost always like that, and the smart criminals never actually made the trade. It was too risky to give a hostage back, because that’s when the cops could get you.

So, as long as Will didn't try anything funny, it should work.

Fritz looked over his captive, trying to decide if Will meant to do anything. It was honestly hard to tell, because the man was so strange. Fritz thought it would be safe enough, since it should be entertaining for Will, which was the motivation to begin with.

Right?

"Alright," Fritz said, standing up from the table, "I could use a bit more cash. How do you suggest we do this?"

Will grinned brightly, looking genuinely pleased that his suggestion was being followed. There was a spark of malicious glee in his eyes, and Fritz thought it was strange.

"First," Will said, "I'd like to sit up, if you will. Just pull me up and lean me against the wall if you want. It's a bit more dignified, don't you think?"

Fritz didn't really have an opinion on that, so he just shrugged and took hold of the ropes behind Will's shoulders. Fritz dragged Will up and set him up against the wall, absently brushing some dirt off Will's sleeve without thinking.

Will smiled in thanks.

"Alright. Open up my phone, then. The code is 42664225. You'll have to call him. He's in my phone as Meškius."

Fritz opened the phone, bewildered at the pronunciation of whatever the name for Will's paramour was. It was not English, and definitely not Italian. Fritz hoped it would be somewhat phonetic, so he would be able to find it.

Close enough. He found it.

"Don't talk until I put the phone near you," Fritz demanded, trying to show he was in control of the situation, "and then only say what I tell you to."

Will nodded agreeably, and Fritz called the number.

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Will waited as the phone rang, and he saw the way Fritz was nervously chewing on the inside of his cheeks as he waited for the phone to be answered.

Fritz was being surprisingly accommodating to Will. It would have been cause for concern if the captive was anyone but Will Graham, who could tell the man was just unused to being the subject of this brand of manipulation, and incredibly susceptible.

Will heard the ringing stop and Hannibal's voice come through his phone at Fritz's ear. He felt a soft prod of jealousy that his captor was hearing Hannibal while he was not, but he tamped it down to be dealt with later.

“Stop talking. I have Will.”

Fritz sounded very business-like, and Will was impressed. The man he had been dealing with so far didn’t seem as competent as that voice made him sound. Will waited patiently as Fritz negotiated with Hannibal, before his eyes flicked up and met Will’s. Will smiled agreeably, and Fritz walked over to him with the phone.

“Of course he’s alive. He’s fine. I’ll even let him talk to you.”

Fritz held the phone out, placing it next to Will’s ear so Will would be able to hear Hannibal. A small mercy he was glad for. Hannibal’s voice was always soothing to him, and he wasn’t actually immune to the trauma of being kidnapped and imprisoned. It was dredging up bad memories, but Hannibal would be able to make them all quiet down again when this was over.

“Will? Are you alright?”

Hannibal’s voice did provide Will a sense of security, his anxiety calming a bit.

“Tell him you’re alive.”

Fritz looked a bit nervous, but Will knew he couldn’t do anything to him if he didn’t follow the rules. He still had to finish his original job.

“Eternity was in our lips and in our eyes,” Will said, smiling a bit.

There was a soft, relieved sigh from the other end. Hannibal was doing his part to make the entire situation believable, but Will knew he was also honestly stressed, because this was the first time they had tried to pull of something like this, and Will wasn’t the only one affected by what had happened to him in the past.

Fritz took the phone back, glaring at Will for having messed up the script.

“See? He’s fine. Now don’t forget what I told you to do.”

Fritz hung up the phone and turned it all the way off. Will knew that precaution was long overdue, and ultimately useless at this point, but it did give Fritz a few more points towards his competency.

“What the hell did you say to him?” Fritz demanded, “that wasn’t what I told you to say. You could have talked to him more if you had stuck to the script.”

Will felt a pang of regret, but he didn’t let it show. He hadn’t needed to talk to Hannibal any more than he had, even though he would have liked to.

“It was a quote from Shakespeare. Anthony and Cleopatra, to be more specific. My paramour and I often speak to each other that way, using quotes to communicate. It’s a game we play. If I had not responded in such a way, he would have thought something was far more wrong than it is. I did you a favor.”

Fritz didn't seem to quite believe him. The warring reactions were evident on his face, and Will thought they were quite an entertaining show. He was both relieved and dismayed, unsure whether to believe Will or not, but also unsure what reason he would have to not believe Will. Thus far, Will had not done anything to thwart the entire operation. And what might he have even told Hannibal through the quote? He knew very little.

"You needn't worry so much," Will said, tipping his head back and closing his eyes as if to sleep, "It's not as if I could have told him where we are. I don't even know that. So calm down and enjoy the rest of my bread and cheese. I see you took the liberty of starting in on it, and I wouldn't want it to go to waste. My partner is very picky about his food, and I'm sure he wouldn't want it to go to waste either."

Fritz nodded slowly headed back to the table in silence, and Will heard the sounds of him starting to eat the food again. By his silence, Will guessed he was deep in thought, but Will couldn't imagine what the man would be thinking deeply about.

It didn't matter too much, though. Will had other things to think about.

Like untying the ropes that were fastened around his wrists.

If the people behind this knew anything about Will, Fritz would have been instructed not to let any of the knots be where Will could reach them. Will wasn't sure if Fritz had been the one to make a mistake here, or the people who hired him.

The knots weren't anything elaborate. Will was able to untie them fairly quickly, and he tested where the ropes were loose after that. He would be able to be free pretty quick when he decided he needed to act. So all he had to do was wait.

"How did you know about my brother?" Fritz asked.

Will opened his eyes and looked at his captor, tipping his head curiously.

"Lucky guess," he said, the most simple form of the truth.

Fritz scowled and shook his head.

"No it wasn't. Tell me how you knew."

Will hummed in consideration, debating whether he should explain himself or not.

"Alright. There may have been a bit more to it," he admitted with a smile, "but that wasn't a lie. The way you have been acting gave away that you're doing it for someone else. When I saw you in the art gallery, you were frightened, but you didn't give up or transfer the job to someone else. You're determined to get your pay, even though you clearly aren't terribly in want yourself. That means you probably have someone else relying on this job. Most likely that kind of thing is a family member, sibling, and statistically men are more likely to get into those situations without just getting murdered right out. So, you must have a brother that's in trouble, and you're going to help him out when you get paid from this job. When you talked about him, you said your loyalty is spent, and this is the last time you're going to help him,

which means you're probably going to help him get out of the country and out of trouble, a whole new start."

Will stopped his mini lecture for a moment, watching Fritz for a reaction. The man appeared entirely stunned, his mouth slightly open in shock and his eyes wide and unblinking. He had apparently forgotten the bit of bread he was holding in his hand, and his grip was so loose Will thought he might drop it at any moment.

"Do you believe me?" Will asked.

Fritz blinked and shook his head to clear it.

"I don't really see an alternative," he said, "You explained it in a way that makes sense, even though I don't think most people would be able to figure all that out from what you did. I didn't think you could actually be as smart as everyone was telling me you are."

Will huffed a laugh.

"What made you think I couldn't be that smart?" he asked, "or, I suppose, how smart have people been telling you I am?"

Fritz shook his head again.

"All my instructions emphasized not to give you the chance to do anything, and not to underestimate you," he held up a piece of paper, "this says you're highly intelligent. But you let me catch you. You knew I was following you, and you still went out by yourself and walked into that alley. Not to mention, you look like some kind of escort when you go out with that man you're with."

Will laughed again. He would have to tell Hannibal this guy had thought Will looked like an escort. Hannibal would find it funny, though slightly insulting. They would have a good laugh over dinner.

"So, now you know you have been underestimating me," he said, "what are you going to do about that? Doesn't that concern you at all?"

Will watched as color drained slightly from his captor's face.

# 5

Fritz felt like he was in a movie, that moment when the villain realizes the hero has been going easy on them the entire time. He knew he was technically the bad guy here, and what Will had just asked him had brought to light the fact that he had been entirely stupid up until this point.

Fritz shot up from his chair, intending to walk over and check Will's bindings, but then a knock came at the door.

Fritz froze. He hadn't expected the boss to knock, especially in that way. It sounded polite but insistent. Like a salesman or census taker. Someone who refused to be ignored, but would be professional in their antagonizing.

Casting a glance to his captive, who was just smiling mildly, Fritz headed up the stairs to answer the door.

Fritz looked out of the peephole on the door, but didn't see anyone on the stoop. He wasn't sure what to expect, so he opened the door and poked his head out.

And everything went black.

---

"I almost thought you weren't coming," Will said, shrugging off the last of the rope. He heard Hannibal dragging the unconscious captor down the stairs, and he felt the tension in his shoulders slowly dissipating. Hannibal's presence was just soothing to him.

"I could not stay behind you. My desire more sharp than filed steel did spur me forth."

Will grinned and turned to Hannibal. His grin faded a bit when he saw the serious look of concern on Hannibal's own face.

"I'm really fine," Will told him, his own concern growing in the face of Hannibal's worry, "I'm alright now that you're here."

Hannibal walked up to Will and held his face in his hands. Will met his eyes and realized Hannibal hadn't liked this plan at all. He had literally been worried sick, even though everything had been planned out.

Hannibal kissed Will gently, then his hands wandered into Will's hair and he pulled away.

"You *have* been hurt," Hannibal said, as if that alone justified all his worry. As if they hadn't known all along how this would go, and Will would likely be hurt in the process.

"Just a little knock to the head," Will told him, "he had to get me here somehow."

Hannibal checked Will's eyes and his frown grew.

“You have a concussion,” he said disapprovingly, as if it was Will’s fault.

Will sighed.

“Yeah. I thought I might,” he admitted, “I guess you’ll have to make sure I don’t fall asleep today.”

The attempt at teasing fell short, and Hannibal only continued to study Will with concern.

“Alright,” Will said at last, “I won’t ever be the bait again. Happy?”

Hannibal smiled and kissed Will again.

“Yes,” he said.

Will huffed.

“God. You’re so demanding,” he said, pulling away from Hannibal to get the clothes Fritz had divested him of.

Hannibal laughed softly.

“If being concerned for your well being qualifies as being demanding, then I will accept that entirely,” he said, “however, of the two of us, I believe you are much more demanding than I.”

Will face heated slightly with a blush. He knew Hannibal had been going for that, but he couldn’t help it. They both knew Will had fun seeing what he could get away with, including demanding things from Hannibal. The answer was nearly anything.

“Let’s just get this over with so we can go back to the house. I missed you.”

Will’s hands were struggling with his shoes, because Hannibal had managed to fluster him and his fingers felt clumsy and awkward with the laces.

Hannibal knelt at Will’s feet and gently pushed his hands away.

“My willing love, the rather by these arguments of fear, set forth in your pursuit,” he said gently, tying Will’s shoes exactly right, as if Will was nothing but a child who needed help.

Hannibal often made Will feel that way, but Will loved him anyway. His blush deepened at Hannibal’s words, but he smiled. He really was desperately in love with him, and was sure he would never get tired of waking up next to him. He would never take for granted the quiet moments, or the freedom Hannibal gave him in everything. Hannibal was possessive, but would never stop Will from acting on his desires.

“So, what are we going to do with Fritz?” Will asked, picking up a paper from the table and glancing at the list.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow and stood, walking over to where the man lay, still unconscious. He rolled Fritz over with his toe to look at his face and consider him for a moment.

“His name is Fritz?” Hannibal asked.

Will shrugged.

“It’s the name he gave me, and he wasn’t lying as far as I could tell,” he answered.

Hannibal nodded.

“Did you learn who he is working for?” Hannibal asked, turning back to Will without touching Fritz any more.

Will shook his head.

“He was pretty tight lipped about that, but look at this.”

Will grinned as he held up the list. Hannibal smiled as well.

“Whoever it is, they knew very well who they had sent him after,” Hannibal said, walking over to take the list from Will and read through it, “though I suppose he still underestimated you.”

Will nodded and stood.

“Yeah. I don’t think he followed any of those instructions,” he said, “except calling when I was here. He did that.”

Hannibal huffed a laugh and put the list back on the table.

“Let us prepare for company,” he said, and kissed Will again.

---

Anthony made his way to the house where Fritz was holding Will Graham.

Anthony was the last surviving member of the Family, and was finally going to put the world to rights again.

Will Graham was the reason they were dead. He had lied to them and led them right into a trap by the Vergers. The Vergers had killed everyone, except Anthony. Mason, the sadistic freak, had explained he would leave Anthony alive in case he ever needed something from him.

And now Mason was dead too.

Everywhere Will Graham went, death followed. Anthony had been watching. He had watched as Mason grew more successful with Will’s insight to guide his business dealings. Anthony had watched as Mason lost Will and ran around like a chicken with his head cut off.

He had watched as Mason tried to get Will back despite having lost his face to the man. Anthony had watched as the Verger estate had burned to the ground.

And Anthony had watched as Will Graham entered the public eye, and death followed quickly in his wake.

Now, Anthony had finally found Will, and had subdued him. Will Graham would be at Anthony's mercy.

Anthony had no intention of taking Will anywhere.

He would kill Fritz, and then punish Will Graham for everything he had caused to happen.

Fritz believed Anthony was sending men to take Will and pay him. Fritz expected to never see Anthony's face.

It would be the last thing he ever saw.

The building was small and outwardly appeared abandoned. Anthony was pleased with Fritz's work. He had been dubious to begin with, but Fritz had worked well. At least as far as Anthony could tell so far. He hadn't been killed by Graham or his associate Doctor, at least.

Anthony stood against his car and dialed the phone Fritz was using. It rang three times before the call was answered.

"Fritz, open the door," he said quickly, anxious to get this part over with. He was holding a gun, and had it aimed carefully where Fritz's head would appear at any moment.

A calm hum came through the phone, making the hair on the back of Anthony's neck stand on end. He felt some premonition of doom.

"Anthony," A voice said, and his blood froze solid in his veins, "I'm so glad you survived that whole debacle with your family. I'm afraid Fritz is a bit, hum, tied up at the moment. You're welcome to come in if you'd like."

Anthony ended the call and ducked behind his car to think it over.

That had been Will Graham himself. He had somehow gotten the better of Fritz, and now he was running the show. Fritz had not done as well as Anthony had hoped.

This was dangerous. Anthony knew he wasn't likely to get a hand up now. He knew Will was smart and dangerous. He had killed many people already, and was the reason for many more deaths.

Was that other man here? That rich Doctor Will had appeared with after escaping the Verger estate? If he was, Anthony thought it was too late to get out of this alive regardless.

Maybe he could cause Will Graham some pain on his way, though. He had no intention of going down without a fight.

His decision made, Anthony stood back up and tucked the gun into his belt as he walked up to the building. He would talk, try to lull Will a bit, and then strike. He would be careful, because he knew to be otherwise would certainly mean he would die. If he was careful, he might just survive this.

Anthony didn't knock on the door, and found it unlocked. He was satisfied by that, if not exactly pleased. He doubted anything could please him in this circumstance.

Except, perhaps, killing Will Graham and his wealthy Doctor.

---

Will grinned when he heard the door open and close.

Anthony had been careful to be as quiet as possible, but Will could still hear the door from his place in the basement.

Will was half surprised Anthony was alone. He had expected a posse of men for what Anthony no doubt intended to be their final encounter. But being the only surviving member of the family must not have been a very lucrative business. Will doubted if Fritz would have been paid if Anthony had been given a subdued and helpless Will.

Will continued with his own work as he heard Anthony move around above him. He knew Hannibal would be tracking his every step, though Hannibal was much better at remaining silent.

Will had given Anthony to Hannibal.

Will felt no desire to make the kill personal, and he knew Hannibal did. Hannibal had not been involved in the death of the rest of the family, and had mourned the lost opportunity to punish them for how they had treated Will.

It amused Will, and he was satisfied with this development. He was only too happy to allow Hannibal this small indulgence.

And Will had other fish to fry. Fritz, as a matter of fact, and Will was thinking they might actually fry him. He was sure Hannibal would be exasperated with him for even suggesting such a thing, but Hannibal would not deny Will his whims. Will knew how to get his way.

"Will Graham!" Anthony shouted overhead, and Will smiled as he worked, "show yourself, you bastard! Face me!"

Will huffed a laugh and shook his head.

Anthony thought he was owed this. Little did he know, no one was owed anything in life. No level of suffering got you happiness, and no amount of wrongdoing actually resulted in punishment. There was no cosmic power that determined what one was owed. Only other people could enact justice.

Will didn't care much for that, but he did like revenge.

“I think he’s going to be disappointed,” Will told Fritz, though the man was beyond hearing him now. He would never hear anything again. Fritz was dead, and this was his becoming.

Will wondered what would happen to Fritz’s brother, now. If he was expecting help from Fritz, he would be left waiting. If he didn’t know, then he would never have to worry about it. Will hoped he didn’t know, but he guessed it didn’t matter much either way. The brother would still be in whatever trouble he was in.

Fritz was going to serve a higher purpose, and Will just wished they were in Florence so it could be a message to that man that had suspected Hannibal all those years ago. In his salad days.

As it was, Will thought it possibly the man would hear about what was about to happen here. If he was determined to catch the Monster of Florence, he might even come here to look for leads. That would be fun, and Will would enjoy leading him around on wild goose chases plenty.

But that was all for later. Right now, Will had to remember what Hannibal had taught him about butchering.

# 6

Chapter Notes

> @stellar_infires: TAKE THAT! I am filled with spite. Did I write this entire thing just to spite you? Yes. Am I working on the next chapter on a high from that same spite? Absolutely. Should I thank you for motivating me by being your agitating self? Probably. But I am too filled with spite at the moment to do it.

Anthony thought he had heard a soft muttering of words from somewhere else in the building. He was almost sure of it. After he had shouted, there had been a long pause, but he was sure he had heard someone talking.

That was actually a good thing. If one of them had talked, it meant they were both together in that room far away from where Anthony currently was. It made things simpler, and meant he wasn't being stalked through the building like prey.

Anthony thought they were probably in the basement. It would give them the advantage of time as he looked for the door, and they would be sure which direction he was coming from.

The only problem, then, was that Anthony was having to look at all. He didn't know this building, and didn't know where the door to the basement was.

Every door he came to was closed, which he found both odd and ominous. He had to open them, and the lack of care given to this building meant none of the hinges were silent. If they were lying in wait in the basement, they would be able to easily track his movements from one room to another.

It was all by design, he was sure. In all his watching Will Graham these past years, he had learned that the man was a master of manipulation who was always in control. That was probably how he had gotten the better of Fritz. The foolish man had let Will talk, against Anthony's specific instructions. That could have been his only mistake, but it was enough. It was enough because they were working with Will Graham.

Anthony opened another door, wincing at the loud creaking of the hinges, and found himself staring into the eyes of a man who looked half mad. He drew his gun before he realized it was a mirror, and the crazed expression his own. He let out a soft breath and shook his head at his own folly. He was just nervous. Nervous because he was possibly the only man on earth who knew what Will Graham was capable of, and probably the only person who could stop him.

Anthony was so distracted by his own justifications he didn't notice the second face in the mirror until the blade was pressed to the side of his throat.

Anthony froze, his eyes fixed on the mirror, staring into those eyes that almost seemed to glow red with malice. They were not the eyes of Will Graham, but Anthony recognized the man smiling over his shoulder just the same.

It was Doctor Hannibal Lecter. Will Graham's newest partner in crime.

"Hello Anthony," the accented voice said calmly into his ear, "I don't believe we've been properly acquainted, but I have been greatly anticipating our meeting."

Anthony swallowed, his throat suddenly dry and the motion pressing his skin against the blade a bit more. He had lost. He had not been careful enough, and he was going to die.

"Why might that be?" he asked, hoping to distract the man long enough for him to think of an escape.

The man's smile never wavered. He just held Anthony's eyes in the mirror.

"I take satisfaction from punishing those who caused Will pain," he said, as if that was only logical and not completely psychotic, "and your family was the start of his greatest suffering. I regret I had not been there to aid their downfall."

Anthony swallowed again.

"So this is some sick revenge for something my family did?" he asked, trying to sound indignant rather than terrified.

Lecter laughed softly in Anthony's ear.

"I would not have called it such, but I believe Will appreciates the idea of revenge more than myself. No, I consider this punishment of a more divine nature. I would never have been given this chance if you had not decided to track us down and cause problems, after all."

Anthony's blood ran cold as he realized what the man was saying. Anthony had doomed himself to this fate. He had signed his own death warrant the moment he hired Fritz to find and capture Will Graham. Lecter saw this as more of a convenient defense than outright revenge.

And wasn't he right, in some round about way?

Anthony had meant to hurt Will. He had meant to make him suffer and then kill him. This man was protecting Will, and taking the chance to enact his own idea of justice as well.

They were not so different from each other, but Anthony seemed to always lose, no matter how carefully he planned or acted. Lecter always came out on top, as far as Anthony had seen. The man never lost.

Now, Anthony would die because it's what Lecter wanted. Lecter always got what he wanted.

"Are you going to make me regret it all?" Anthony asked, hopeless despite himself.

Lecter hummed thoughtfully, sliding the blade gently along Anthony's neck, light enough he didn't draw blood. Yet.

"I think you already do," he said softly, "Am I right?"

Anthony closed his eyes. He would have nodded, but for the blade against his skin.

"Yes. I regret trying to take him while he was with you. I should have waited until he chose someone new."

Lecter grinned at him in the mirror, the knife making a nick in Anthony's skin and drawing a slow trickle of blood.

"You are more foolish than I thought," Lecter said calmly, "If you truly believe I would ever let Will go. Or that he would let me go. Whichever direction you expected it to go."

Anthony didn't know why Lecter was drawing this out so long. It was clear he was going to die. There was no possible ending that resulted in him living through the night.

Lecter was playing with him.

"What game are you playing?" he asked, feeling faint despite himself.

Lecter huffed a laugh.

"I enjoy playing with my food, however poor that may be in sense of table manners. You reek of fear, but I think Will won't mind, so long as I find a suitable marinade."

The world went black.

—

Will heard Hannibal approaching, and turned to meet him. He had expected the game to stretch on much longer, but he supposed Hannibal might have gotten over excited and killed Anthony too quickly. It wasn't unheard of for Hannibal to be impulsive.

Especially when it came to Will.

Hannibal was carrying Anthony, and the man certainly didn't look dead. Will had learned to tell the difference. He was just unconscious.

"The poor fool fainted," Hannibal explained, laying him on the recently vacated table, "I had rather hoped to make him sweat for some time yet."

Will laughed and stepped up to press a kiss under Hannibal's ear.

"We can always take him to go," he teased, "leave Fritz here to be found, and take our time with Anthony. I doubt very much we will be caught."

Hannibal turned with a devilish glint in his eye.

“What a dangerous creature you are, Will Graham,” he growled lowly, “that is a risk I would never have considered taking before meeting you.”

Will grinned.

“Expanding your palate, Doctor Lecter,” he replied.

Hannibal caught Will and pulled him into a heated, devouring kiss.

“Can one desire too much of a good thing?”

“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.”

Fritz was set up, just as Will wanted, and they carried foolish Anthony to the car he had brought himself in. Will was excited to see what Hannibal would choose to do with Anthony, a man who had tried so desperately to take this lovely life away from them because of Will’s acts of desperation all those years ago.

Hannibal was gorgeous this way, full of his own brand of righteous anger, as dangerous as a caged tiger and powerful as the devil himself.

Will wanted to devour him, remove his own organs until Hannibal could crawl inside and make himself at home in the cage of his ribs. He thought he would be able to breathe just fine without his lungs, if Hannibal were there instead. He thought his blood would pump, and food digest. Hannibal was all he needed.

At the same time, Will wanted to claw at Hannibal until his skin peeled away, leaving an opening for Will to plunge his hands inside and take hold of the man’s bones. Embed himself in Hannibal’s skeleton so they could never be parted.

Hannibal looked at Will from the driver’s side, his eyes flashing as if he knew exactly what Will was thinking of.

They knew each other so intimately, Will didn’t think that was far from the truth. Hannibal might know every thought and feeling that crossed his mind, just as Will could read the minutiae of Hannibal’s body language every day, and know how he was and what he had done.

“Do you suppose Jack might learn of this, and think of us?” Hannibal asked, his mouth twisting in a proud smirk.

Will mirrored the expression, amused by the idea.

“Do you think Pazzi might?” he replied, “it would be quite the meeting of the minds if they were to come together. They would either be best friends, bonding over their mutual frustration, or tense rivals, deciding to compete over who can catch the one who got away before the other.”

Will laughed, then, because the idea was so absurd.

“They should both be looking for the same man, but they have no idea.”

Hannibal smiled.

“They should both fear you far more than me,” he said, “of the two of us, I believe you are more dangerous.”

Anthony stirred slightly in the back of the car, and Will glanced at him. He hummed thoughtfully.

“Jack has no idea you are to be feared, and Pazzi has no idea I exist. They are both missing half of the puzzle. Maybe if they came together, they would realize how foolish they have been. They might just become a threat to us.”

Hannibal huffed a laugh.

“Not a very great threat,” he said, “I have little faith in their abilities, even combined, to find us and prove a thing against us.”

Will hummed in agreement, and closed his eyes. He felt tired.

“Will,” Hannibal said sharply, pulling Will from his doze, “you mustn’t sleep. You have a concussion.”

Will cursed, both English and Italian, and rubbed at his face.

“It’s going to be a long night,” he groaned.

He felt exhausted. Some of it was probably the already mentioned concussion, but he had also been busy today. It took a lot of energy to thwart a kidnapping, turn it around, kill a man, and abduct the other. He wanted to sleep. He wanted to lay in bed with Hannibal, curl up into his manly chest hair, and sleep.

“I believe we can find ways to entertain ourselves,” Hannibal answered.

Will smiled tiredly.

That was something he agreed with.

# 7

Chapter Notes

> This chapter may not be all that clean, because I did little to no editing. But I wanted to finally have it finished. So I apologize for any errors.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“He’s waking, just look.”

Anthony wondered where he was. He remembered the knife to his throat, and the glint of maroon eyes in a mirror. He remembered being sure he was about to die.

But he didn’t think he was dead.

Anthony opened his eyes and met those of the same man he had seen in the mirror behind him as the world went dark.

Lecter grinned.

“Welcome back,” he said pleasantly, “I confess I had not expected you to faint that way. You did not inherit any of the grit of your family, I see. You are somewhat of a disappointment.”

Anthony felt a jolt of indignant anger.

Anthony had never been a disappointment. He had always done what he had to do. He had always been a source of pride for his family and their business dealings. He would not be spoken to that way.

In his attempt to lunge for the man, Anthony found his wrists suspended above him and tethered to the ceiling. They must not have been that way for long, because he still had feeling in them. It was uncomfortable, bordering on painful, and the tether was just short enough he could not take more than one step in any direction.

Anthony let out a string of curses, pulling against the ties so the metal cuffs bit into the flesh of his wrists. The pain helped to further wake him, allowing him to see the room he was in. Much to his dismay, Anthony saw a table with an assortment of tools that looked to be instruments of torture, though he guessed they were just surgical implements.

Anthony began to tremble with fear, though he tried to stop himself.

“How cruel of you, Doctor Lecter.”

Anthony saw Will Graham, standing in the dark corner. He was smiling in a way that made Anthony's trembling worsen.

"You are about to hurt him, must you literally add insult to injury?" Will continued, stepping forward and kissing Lecter's neck.

Lecter hummed, smiling to match Graham's.

"I do not regret it, Mangusta," Lecter said, turning and catching Will in a kiss, "You know I intended to punish him. You may think I am being too severe, but I will not stop."

Will hummed, and Anthony thought he sounded amused by it all.

These men were both insane, and Anthony was entirely at their mercy.

"I did not ask you to stop. I only asked a question. If you are entertained, then by all means, proceed," Will said.

Lecter kissed Will again and they parted, both parties smiling as if this was all an ordinary day and activity.

Lecter carefully selected a tool from the table and approached Anthony. His eyes looked black and empty in the low light, and Anthony was certain they were devils in the flesh, the both of them.

He should never have messed with Will Graham. He had gotten on the bad side of the devil himself.

---

Jack heard the news, and immediately went to his office to learn more. He found pictures of the scenes and sat back in his chair, thinking.

Will had said he and Hannibal would be going to Italy. He hadn't said what part, and Jack hadn't asked.

These scenes in Verona didn't look like Will's other handiwork, but Jack couldn't claim he wouldn't be intelligent enough to change it up. Will Graham was the most intelligent killer Jack had ever hunted, and the one he had not been able to catch. Will Graham might have done this. Either or both of them.

Was Hannibal still alive? Jack thought he must be. Will had no resources on his own, and had seemed to enjoy letting Hannibal stand in the spotlight as he operated in the dark. Unless Will had found someone new, equally as optimal, and Hannibal had begun to suspect him, Jack thought Hannibal was still alive.

But he might not be for much longer. If he noticed that death had followed him to Italy, he might begin to suspect Will.

Jack needed to track them down.

Jack got to work, sending pictures of the both of them to the authorities in every major city in Italy. He would have only sent pictures of Will, but he knew Hannibal was more likely to be noticed. Will really enjoyed staying in the shadows.

---

Inspector Pazzi saw the pictures, and his blood went cold. The message from the man in the United States said he was looking for the one with dark hair, this Will Graham, but that they were likely to be together. Agent Crawford also claimed they were in Italy somewhere, and he thought they may be responsible for the recent murders in Verona.

But this other man. Hannibal Lecter. Pazzi knew his face immediately. He was the monster of Florence. The man Pazzi had never been able to catch.

Pazzi got to work, sending a message back to the man in the FBI, telling him everything he knew. He also promised to travel to Verona to look, praying he would be able to. He knew he would never get this course of action sanctioned, but he could take some time off to pursue it.

He had to. He had to see this to the end.

Whoever's end that may be.

---

Jack couldn't believe what he was seeing.

An inspector from Florence said he recognized Hannibal, and he had been looking for him for some years. The man claimed Hannibal was his only suspect in a series of murders dating back to when Hannibal must have been a young man.

The Monster of Florence. That's what Pazzi claimed Hannibal had been known as.

But that didn't make any sense. Hannibal wasn't the dangerous one. Will was the killer. Hannibal was just his cover and his resource.

But if Hannibal knew about Will. If he had known all this time, and had been covering for him. Helping him, even.

Jack had been blind. He had been willfully blinded by their theatrics. The way they had talked circles around him and everyone they met. Why had he never thought they could be working together?

Jack set his head in his hands, remembering the way they had been kind to Bella. She had liked them. They had liked her. They had made her smile, and talk with that passion he had known in the early years. She had been more alive then than the months before.

Or the months after.

Could Jack go, now, and chase after those men, remembering the way they had treated Bella?

Jack steeled himself and began a new message to Pazzi, the man brave enough he said he would attempt to track them down by himself, knowing full well what they were capable of. If Pazzi could be strong, could do this despite everything, Jack could do it, too. He would be strong, and he would find them if it was possible. He would kill them himself if he had to.

Because they had been lying to Bella. They had bewitched her. And now she was gone.

Jack would go, and meet this brave man. The brave man who would help Jack complete the puzzle.

After, Jack would travel through Italy again. He would go to the places where the memories of Bella were the sweetest. He would remember her.

And then he would die. Be with her again.

---

“Inspector Pazzi,” Agent Crawford said warmly, extending a hand to shake, “It’s a pleasure to finally meet you. I am more than impressed with your work.”

Pazzi took the offered hand, but did not smile in return.

“It would be more pleasant, were the business we are about not so grim, Agent Crawford” he said.

Crawford nodded.

“I agree. I would have liked to meet you under other circumstances. Perhaps we can have dinner together when this is all over.”

At that, Pazzi did smile.

“If we finish this, I will invite you to my home, personally. My wife always complains we do not have company often enough.”

Crawford agreed.

“I fear they may have left this place already,” Pazzi confessed as they made their way to the scene of the first murder, “though it does not match the style of the man I knew all those years ago, I think he may have altered his ways, no?”

Crawford agreed again.

“I didn’t even know Lecter was a killer until you responded to my message. I thought it was all Graham. If Hannibal really is the man you are looking for, then I think they’ve changed each other more than I might be able to imagine. I don’t think anyone could truly predict them now.”

Pazzi nodded.

“The young man I met in the Uffizi gallery all those years ago seemed beyond influence. He could not be changed. If this Will Graham has managed to change him, God help us all.”

Jack felt chilled to the bone. Pazzi had a way of creeping someone out when he tried. Or maybe he didn’t have to try. Maybe that was just how he was.

Maybe that was how anyone became after chasing Lecter for long enough. Maybe Jack was like that as well. Maybe Will and Hannibal were more alike than Jack had known.

---

Will kicked his feet through the sand, smiling at the sensation of it between his toes. The water splashed off nearby, filling the air with the smell of salt and freshness.

Hannibal had taken his own shoes off, much to his own chagrin. He still refused to wear sandals, making this the only solution for walking on the beach. Will thought it was charming and debonair. Hannibal was still unconvinced.

“Where shall we go next, Mangusta?” Hannibal asked, taking Will’s hand into his own.

Will looked out at the ocean, the waves endlessly reaching out towards the horizon. Scattered beams of sunlight bounced off the water and flashed into his eyes, making him see sparkles for moments after.

“Anywhere,” Will said, not caring at all that Hannibal would absolutely take that at face value. He really wouldn’t mind anywhere Hannibal decided to take him.

Hannibal hummed in amusement, bumping his shoulder into Will’s and kissing him on the ear.

“Would you be willing to learn another language?” he asked.

Will grinned. He turned and pressed his nose against Hannibal’s shoulder, unable to stop smiling. He was just so happy.

“If you’re willing to teach me,” he said, “I may be smart, but I’m a terrible student.”

Hannibal laughed softly.

“I am well aware, dear heart. It is but one of your many charms.”

Will sighed, leaning up to kiss Hannibal.

He felt as if nothing could stop them. And he believed it most of the time, too.

“Jack Crawford is in Italy,” Hannibal said casually, as if remarking upon the weather.

Will raised an eyebrow.

“Is he?” he asked.

Hannibal nodded.

“Inspector Pazzi and he have joined forces, it seems. They are investigating the deaths in Verona. I rather think a letter to Margot would be prudent. While Jack is away from his post, I think.”

Will huffed a laugh.

“Guess we can’t go back to the good ol’ USA,” he said, “what a shame. I was thinking we’d at least go back to see the old acquaintances. It can’t be helped, though. Do you think Margot will be able to send our things to wherever we go next? Do you think we’ll ever settle down anywhere? Or are we bound to run for the rest of our lives?”

Hannibal leaned in and bit Will’s ear gently.

“I would be content to live just as we have been,” he said warmly, “but I do have plans to build a life. We shall see.”

Will smiled at the other man, still full to bursting with pleasure. He was just so desperately in love with Hannibal, but he could have everything he wanted. He wasn’t denied anything, and he couldn’t believe it.

“I guess so,” Will said.

“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.”

“Nothing ‘gainst time’s scythe can make defense.”

Chapter End Notes

And that's the end of this story! Three parts, and far too many Shakespeare quotes. Or perhaps not enough. Regardless, it's over. I hope you all enjoyed the trip, and read all three parts. If not, it doesn't really matter, though this bit with Jack may be confusing if you haven't.
Thanks for reading. <3

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